

Murd'ring Ministers

Issue #28

Jan. 19, 1981

STUFF

MURD'RING MINISTERS is a gamezine dedicated to the play of postal DIPLOMACY and other postal wargames or a political nature. DIPLOMACY is owned by the Avalon Hill Game Co. and invented by Allan Calhamer. MM is published by Ron Brown, 1528 El Sereno Pl., Bakersfield, CA 93304; (805) 834-8409. MM Has the subscription rate of 12/\$5.50/12 issues (50¢ per single copy). Gamefees vary (see GAME OPENINGS). MM features three week deadlines and is published monthly, and every once in awhile more often because of a special all-reading issue, like this one.

Well, here we are. The first issue of MM since #1 not to have any game results contained. I can't guarantee or even predict wildly how often these will come out but it probably won't be that often. I hope you enjoy some of the things inside . . .

First off, I'm sure many of you have received a copy of PEEK, a DIPLOMACY zine published by Jane Proskin. Many more of you may be receiving a copy after "Jane" sees the updated MM mailing list which appears within. (No, John M. I'm not inviting another fake; after all we just got one!). In PEEK, is the information that if you wish to write to Jane you should write to "Occupant, PO Box 6824, Burbank, CA 91510," although I have no idea if this is a real address or a bogus one. I guess I shouldn't say just that. I bet it's real. My copy of PEEK arrived 1/12/81. It only contained the cover, inside cover, and blank pages within. On the outside was a note from "Jane" reading,
"Ronnie Honey!

You have wronged 'ol Janie. So I am just going to send you a blank copy until you right those wrongs.

Jane"

I've been told by a reliable source who received a copy of PEEK that it was pretty good, especially the article inside entitled, "Miss Proskin's Mis-Affair With Ronnie Brown." It is full of "information" about how the Fake MM #27 was conceived, published, and distributed by Jane. There's not any truth to it, of course, except the part about me and Jane on the couch. Imagine that upity broad! I was just getting warmed up and she bonks me on the head with a lamp! You'd think she's be grateful after being with Kuszynski so long!

Jane is really angry with me and states in PEEK, "Of course Ronnie is not the only one that I am peeved at. Bruce Linsey, Dick Martin, and Bob Arnett carried his story about how JOY OF JANE was an invention of Al Rodriguez. All three of them knew full well, at the time, that this was a LIE. All four of these persons

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then (Brown, Linsey, Arnett, and Martin) owe me a full and complete apology."

First, I never said, "I know Al Rodriguez did JoJ." I said something like, "I bet Al Did it." As yet, he has not confessed but the last time he did something like this (THE REAL VOLKER fake also known as THE BAKERSFIELD VOLKER) he didn't admit doing it for six months. The NO WAY JOSE bit is true. If anyone stops by they are welcome to see Char's little, gold NO WAY JOSE. I suppose I could even manage to publish a picture of it (being worn by her of course) . . . Now how would anyone but Al know about that? The only other would be Kuszynski and he's so dazed he'd never notice it! Jack Masters told me it was Gary Coughlan who faked MM #27. He even claimed to have mailed them for Gary. But I know that Gary had nothing to do with it, Jack is probably fibbing about mailing them too.

See the RRR column for letters from others who have reason to suspect Rodriguez. PEEK bears the now-famous Van Nuys postmark which is Black Jack Masters' trademark. Is Black Jack trying to take credit for doing JOY OF JANE? PEEK sure appears to be Black Jack's work. First, Black Jack tries to claim he is Donovan and did the Mellow Yellow VOD. Now he's claiming he is Jane Proskin and did the Fake MM #27! I know Gary Coughlan is really Donovan and I can prove it. Mike Mills knows this too. In fact, he knew it all along and played along with Gary's ~~Tal~~ter ego. Speaking of Mike Mills, publisher of EMHAIN MACHA, EM arrived a short time ago. Mike ~~states~~ states in EM #17, pg. 8 "However, notable among the suspects is one Al Rodriguez, who for many months had quietly let it be known that he wanted to spoof Ron Brown's MM." So Jack has obviously lied about this. Really, Jack, do you expect us to believe that you are the perpetrator of every fake DIPzine that comes out? Next thing you know, Jack will be claiming he did the BRUXUS BULLETIN fake! Come on, now . . . Anyway, despite clubbing me in the head with a lamp, Jane, please forgive me. There. Now I have apologized to Jane and expect Arnett, Linsey, and Martin to do the same. Make sure you see the article, "Winning or Not -- What Does It All Mean?" on pg. ____ of this issue. It's written by an interesting fellow named "Johnnie" who will tell you who REALLY did the Fake MM #27. (I just found out a few nights ago).

This may be your last chance to nominate someone to be the winner of the soon-to-be-coveted NIXON AWARD for being the Big Liar of the year (80). A paragraph explaining your nomination is required to place your nomination. The winning entry will be published in MM #30 and the winner also receives a handsome Jerry Jones original 'Certificate of Diplomatic Survival'. Publishers please plug this important contest.

Speaking of Fake Zines (huh?) another arrived the other day! This one, entitled Y'ALL, is done by "Gary Coughlan". As we all know, those who read MM #27 (the real one) and Jane Proskin's PEEK, Gary is starting a new zine EUROPE EXPRESS. But this Y'ALL arrived soon after this information was released and so the faker only knew Gary would have a new zine, but not its name. Leading ~~by~~ candidates are Bruce Linsey, Dick Martin, and Kathy Byrne/John Caruso. Postmarked 1/5/81 from Phoenicia, NY (12464) makes me believe that either Linsey or Caruso mailed it but my bet is Dick Martin is the faker himself. Right, Dick?

Bernard Sampson, 123 Sixth St., Middlesex, NJ 08846 publishes TORPEDO (\$5.00 per 12 issues). In his latest issue (#5, 1/7/81) Bernard announces that Jack Masters will cease publication of BLACK FROG with issue #24! But Black Jack has already published #31! Bern also states that PEARL, the Masters fake of a new zine by Dave Perlmutter is for real and quotes Dave's address for sample requests. All MM readers beware! Pearly Dave has publicly announced he will keep any money sent to him for PEARL subscriptions! And naturally he has no plans to publish so don't send any \$. (In fact, Dave is leaving the hobby). (Con'd next pg.)

STILL MORE STUFF

Speaking of BLACK FROG (again), #31 which arrived a few days ago was most entertaining. Some news contained therein bears mention here. First, while Jack does not actually deny being the PEEK publisher, he nevertheless does not claim to be the perpetrator either. Of course, "genuine BF mailing abels were used to mail them out," Jack. What else would you use? And I'm sure that the "Occupant" of PO Box 6824, Burbank (beautiful downtown Burbank?) CA has a very cozy relationship with Black Jack (if not actually registered to on John H. Masters). All I hope is that Jack gets over his anger at me and sends my next PEEK with something other than blank pages between the covers!

John Caruso has announced the results of his First Annual Players' Poll (John Caruso, 42-34 Saull St., Flushing, NY 11355 publishes WHITESTONIA, (\$4.00/10 issues, \$2.00 gmefee for Reg. DII), and has opening. The "Best Regular DIPLOMACY Player" voting went like this:

1. Randolph Smyth 2. Kathy Byrne 5.(tie) Bob Arnett, Bill Hart, Dick Martin, Mark Lew, Bob Sergeant 18.(tie) MRon Brown, Arturo Guajardo, Keith Mercer, John Caruso.

"The Best Variant DIPLOMACY Player" voting went like this:

1. Fred Hyatt 2.(tie) Vern Schaller, Lee Kendter Sr., 6.(tie) Mark Berch, John Caruso, Fred Davis, Dave Crabar, Mark Lew, Bruce Linsey, Bill Schiwautz.

"The Best DIPLOMACY Article Writer" voting went like this:

1. John Masters, 2. Gary Coughlan, 4.(tie) Bob Sergeant, Bernie Oaklyn, Mark Lew, Al Fearson 15. (tie) John Caruso, Norm Schwartz.

Quick Comments -- I'm very pleased to see Jack be voted the number 1 article writer in the hobby (I'm one who voted him thus); in my mind there's no one else anywhere near his abilities as a writer. Also, I'm glad that right behind him is Gary Coughlan, the 'Ol Memphis Flash, himself! 26 people cast their votes this time around -- perhaps we can get a bigger voter turnout the next time John runs his poll. Congrats to all the above named peoples!

Glenn Overby, (23096 Tawas, Hazel Park, MI 48030) publisher of JIHAD is conducting a zine poll of the zines that began publication in 1980. Everyone in the hobby is invited to rate the new zines of 1980 on a scale of 1-10 (with 10 the highest). Votes should be in by Feb. 1, 1981 to Glenn at the above address. Zines in contention are:

- | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. TORIEDO | 7. BLACK FROG |
| 2. MIKE'S MAG | 8. LONE STAR DIPLOMAT |
| 3. THE POWER AND THE GLORY | 9. ALLIANCE GREED |
| 4. JIHAD | 10. PLAGUE TIMES |
| 5. INVASION | 11. JUST AMONG FRIENDS |
| 6. LIFE OF MONTY | 12. BORN TO DIE |

Glenn (just mentioned above) Overby is also undertaking a North American Hobby Census. All publishers are requested to send their mailing lists to Glenn by March 15, '81. Let's support this effort, guys!

And now, Ye Olde Main Minister's New Year's Resolutions:

I resolve to be...

- 1) as liberal as John Michalski
- 2) as slim as Bob Olsen
- 3) able to take criticism as well as Bruce Linsey
- 4) able to write as comprehensive house rules as John Caruso
- 5) as good a liar as Al Fearson
- 6) a football coach as firmly entrenched in his job as Bum Phillips

MURD'RING MINISTERS' REVISED HOUSE RULES (Jan. 1981)

- 1) All standard rules of DIPLOMACY will be used, except where amended in these Houserules, as found in the Avalon Hill Rulebook of 1976.
- 2) Deadlines -- The deadline for turning in moves will be printed in the game result of each individual game. Deadlines will be STRICTLY enforced. This will be to insure that the zine will be as punctual as possible. MAILED ORDERS must arrive by post the day of the deadline or sooner. PHONED IN ORDERS must be called in by 10:00pm the day BEFORE the deadline or sooner. NO EXCEPTIONS will be made.
- 3) Orders -- Orders are to mailed to that particular game's Gamemaster. Please note that this is a postal gamezine and as such, please try to MAIL your orders in. Orders sent must contain the following in order to be valid: the game ID number (the Boardman Number or temporary MM or TZ number if a BN is yet to be assigned), the date the order is sent, the country assignment, and the player's signature. Failure to follow this procedure will not result in an NMR. However, failure of the above may result in an error that, if it occurs, will be considered the fault of the PLAYER! Please understand I am striving for player protection here. If you must phone your orders in (as we all need to do occasionally), please do so with the understanding that if you do not speak with the GM personally, there is no guarantee that your orders won't be fouled up. Wives and/or Roommates can be a great help and capable of taking orders but mistakes have been made in this manner before; so beware! (It's always a good idea to have your orders read back to you in any case. Phoned in orders are acceptable only between the hours of 6:00pm-10:00pm PST.
- 4) NMR Insurance -- This available only if requested. On a separate sheet of paper send your request for NMR Insurance and your phone number. If I have received no orders by the evening prior to the deadline, I will call you collect and "collect" your moves. If I am unable to reach you at this time an NMR will result anyway if your orders don't arrive in the mail of the following day. Of course, when I call, it's best to refuse the charges and call back immediately direct (saves you a lot of moola). NMR Ins. is not foolproof. Don't rely 100% on it.
- 5) You must maintain a subscription or current trade to play in any MM games.
Costs:
Subscription Rate = \$5.50/12 issues
Gamefee for Reg. DIP = \$5.00/game
No Moves Rec'd Deposit = \$2.00
The above fee schedule will become effective with MM-14 (DIP game number, not issue of MM, that is).
- 6) Preference Lists -- A preference list is a listing of the countries you want to play, in the order you wish to play them. Preference lists will be accepted and used as best the GM can manage. (You may not get your 1st choice but you shouldn't get worse than your 3rd choice). The GM has final authority on all country assignments.
- 7) Will not fit here so please look on the next page (backside of this one, I hope).

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"They are as sick that surfeit with too much as they that starve with nothing."

MM HOUSE RULES (Con'd)

- 7) Notation — The following notation will be used in the adjudications of DIP games in MM:
- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| A = army | NMR = No Moves Rec'd |
| F = fleet | NBR = No Builds Rec'd |
| c = convoys | NRR = No Retreat Rec'd |
| s = supports | imp = impossible order |
| H = holds in place | amb = ambiguous order (ex. -F Con-Bul. Which coast?) |
| a = annihilated | NSO = No Such Order |
| d = dislodged | NSU = No Such Unit |
| CD = civil disorder | OTB = Off The Board |
| NVR = No Vote Rec'd | OTM = Ordered To Move |
| GM = Gamesmaster | GGM = Guest Gamesmaster |
- 8) Three letter abbreviations (the first three) will be used to designate provinces and bodies of water with the following exceptions:
- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Nth = North Sea | Lyo = Gulf of Lyon |
| Nwg = Norwegian Sea | Lpl = Liverpool |
| Nwy = Norway | Lvn = Livonia |
| Bot = Gulf of Bothnia | NAt = North Atlantic |
| Tya = Tyrolia | NAf = North Africa |
| Tys = Tyrrhenian Sea | |
- 9) The GM will list possible retreat destinations but makes no guarantee the list will be all-inclusive.
- 10) Failed orders will be underlined. Support and convoy orders which of themselves succeed, will not be underlined, even if the unit supported or convoyed does not succeed in its movement. The province in which a unit lies at the end of a turn will be capitalized. Thus, A Den-KIE succeeds while A DEN-Kie does not. In case a move is mistakenly not underlined, but the move fails, the caps will be the final indicator.
- 11) Supply Center Charts will use this format:
- A. StP, Mos, ~~Sev~~, WAR..... = player controls StP, Mos, and War. Sev was lost while War was gained this game year.
- B. Home, Nwy..... = player controls all his home centers plus Nwy.
- C. Home, RUM, SWE.....(6) +2 = player (Russia) owns all his home centers plus gained Rum and Swe this game year. His total Supply Center count is (6) and he gets to build two new units this winter (+2).
- 12) A list of standby players will be maintained. An NMR will be assigned a standby player, who will inherit the position if the player in question fails to get his moves in twice in a row. If a player NMR's in Spring 1901, a set of pre-conceived neutral moves will be used. If a player NMR's in any other season, all units will hold in place. The neutral moves used for a S'01 NMR are:
- Spring 1901
- | | |
|----------|---|
| Austria: | A Vie-Tri; A Bud-Ser; F Tri-Alb. |
| England: | F Lon-Nth; A Lpl-Yor; F Edi-H. |
| France: | A Mar-Spa; A Par-H; F Bre-Mid. |
| Germany: | A Mun-H; A Ber-Kie; F Kie-Hol. |
| Italy: | A Ven-H; A Rom-H; F Nap-Ion. |
| Russia: | A Mos-H; F StP(sc)-Bot; A War-Ukr; F Sev-Rum. |
| Turkey: | A Con-Bul; A Smy-H; F Ank-H. |

(Con'd next pg.)

MM HOUSERULES (Con'd)

- 13) The playing schedule will include a Spring, Fall, and Winter Cycle. Winter moves will be combined with Spring moves after 1901 unless at least two players request a separation of seasons. Moves sent in may be conditional Orders based upon retreats, removals, and/or Winter Builds. Said Conditional Orders are acceptable so long as the conditions are such as may be satisfied at the end of the season before the conditionals are to be exercised. If none of the conditions given by the player take place, the first set of orders listed will be those used. Therefore, it is wise to label one set, "In All Other Cases".
- 14) If one player submits orders for another player the following conditions must be adhered to:
 1. The orders must bear the signature of the player who owns that nation.
 2. Orders must arrive in separate envelopes.
 This practice is not encouraged but grudgingly allowed.
- 15) Press Releases -- Press is encouraged under the following restraints: Press must carry a dateline. This dateline must be a city or province under the player's control or that of a neutral location (Switzerland, for example). You may not use a city or province as your press dateline if it is in the possession of another player. If a player submits a press release without a dateline or one which is under the control of another player, a dateline will be selected by the GM which is under that player's control. Note that this follows the definition of "Gray Press". "Black Press" is not allowed unless otherwise specified. Strong expletives may be deleted and the publisher reserves this publishing right. But try anything you wish. Press may be conditional upon certain orders succeeding. Press should be limited to not more than 250 words per game season.
- 16) Concession and Draw Proposals -- All calls for a draw or concession must be unanimous to carry. Only the success or failure of the draw proposal will be published; all ballots will remain secret. NVR constitutes a 'Yes' vote on the proposal. If there are multiple draw proposals that pass, the draw involving the largest number of players will be the one that passes.
- 17) If a player drops from his game(s) in MM and/or TZ (note the difference between drop and resign) and does not specifically inform me he wishes to continue receiving MM for the balance of his/her subscription, his subscription will be cancelled and the balance applied to the MM expense account. This hopefully will encourage one to resign prior to leaving a game instead of dropping without a trace and messing up that game for the remaining players.
- 18) The Decisions of the Gamemaster are final. The only valid argument will result from a GM decision that is a direct contradiction of the Rulebook (see #1 above).
- 19) Deception of the GM -- This is about the only unethical trick in the proverbial DIPLOMACY book. If you plan any extraordinary tricks to deceive another player(s), the GM should be informed (like sending a fake game report, for example). Deception of the GM would include such things as falsifying another player's orders either by post or by phone. Always be honest with your GM, he/she/it is on your side and only trying to help you. Should you be caught deceiving the GM in any way, you will be "completely" at the mercy of whatever disciplinary action the GM feels is justified.
- 20) TWILIGHT ZINE will use all the above houserules except Rule # 12 above dealing with Neutral moves.

MURD'RINC MINISTERS MAILING LIST

1. Jeff Albrecht, 2029 Cedar Breaks Dr., Salt Lake City, UT 84118.
2. Bob Arnett, 1500 Waterway Circle, Chesapeake, VA 23320
3. Stephen G. Arnawoodian, 602 Hemlock Circle, Lansdale, PA 19446.
4. Marc Arrigo, 103 Tenby Rd, Havertown, PA 19083.
5. Gerald Austin, PO Box 10214, St. Petersburg, FL 33733.
6. Marion Bates, PO Box 381, Kalkaska, MI 49646.
7. Jim Broshot, PO Box 382, Cameron, MO 64429.
8. Jim Bumpas, 3209 Chambers St., Eugene, OR 97405.
9. Cary Carson, 1924 Channel Dr., Ventura, CA 93003.
10. David Carter, 118 Horsham E Ave., Willowdale, ONT, CANADA M2N 129.
11. John Caruso, 42-~~8~~34 Saull St., Flushing, NY 11355.
12. James Chatfield, 7505 Kenlea Ave., Baltimore, MD 21236.
13. Bill Clements, 354 Wicklow Circle, Jackson, MS 39208.
14. George Collins, 30 Sierra Ave., Piedmont, CA 94611.
15. R. Michael Conner, 3214 Beverly Rd., Austin, TX 78703.
16. Gary L. Coughlan, 4614 Martha Cole Lane, Memphis, TN 38118.
17. George Cunningham, 52 Drew St., Burlington, VT 05401.
18. Robert W. Davis, 7928 Kaiser Dr., Canton Township, MI 48187.
19. James Dunn, 308 East 33 St., Baltimore, MD 21218.
20. Jerome Dunn, 5215 Indigo, Houston, TX 77096.
21. Martin Ethington, 624 N. Linn #3, Iowa City, IA 52240.
22. Robert Fabry, ~~22~~ 2622 James Ct. #3, DeKalb, IL 60115.
23. Rod Fielding, 2512 Franklin St., Bellingham, WA 98225.
24. Kirby Garrett, 1040 Hughes St., Eugene, OR 97402.
25. Bruce T. Filbeck, 4240 Kilgore Rd., Croswell, MI 48422.
26. Jack Fleming, 5000 22nd Ave NE #211, Seattle, WA 98105.
27. Al Giddings, 1901 Mosher Dr. Apt. C, Enid, OK 73701.
28. Paul Goodrich, 301 Crestmont Dr., San Francisco, CA 94131.
29. Dave Grabar, 1583 Truman, Chowchilla, CA 93610.
30. Art Haehnel, 1055 Cove, Prospect Hts., IL 60070.
31. Timothy R. Haffey, 810 53rd ~~XXX~~ Ave., Oakland, CA 94601.
32. Scott Hanson, 701 15th Ave SE, Minneapolis, MN 55414.
33. Mike Hartman, 15515 Sunset #207, Pacific Palisades, CA 90270.
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35. Roy Henricks, 128 Deerfield, Pittsburgh, PA 15235.
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40. John Kador, 20 Hilltop Rd., Silver Spring, MD 20740.
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44. Jennifer King, 950 La Canada Verdugo, Pasadena, CA 91103.
45. Mark Kraft, 14690 Badger Pass Rd., Morgan Hill, CA 95037.
46. J.P. Kunstenaar, 3638 Durocher #4, Montreal, QUE CANADA H2X 2E8.
47. Dan Kuszynski, 3405 Westchester, Bakersfield, CA 93309.
48. Ramon Lazaro, 401 Eighth Ave Apt. 5, Brooklyn, NY 11215.
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50. Mark Lew, 3120 W. 79th, Anchorage, AK 99502.
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52. Tom Mainardi, 1403 Lawrence Rd., Havertown, PA 19083.
53. Dick Martin, 26 Orchard Way N., Rockville, MD 20854.
54. John H. Masters, 25711 No. Vista Fwys. Dr., Valencia, CA 91355.

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55. Matthew McKibbin, 1021 Karen Pl., Anaheim, CA 92805.
56. Ralph McKnight Jr., 4012 Wilson Rd., Bakersfield, CA 93309.
57. Keith Mercer, R.D. #6, Old Ash Rd., Mercer, PA 16137.
58. John Michalski, Rt. 10, Box 526Q, Moore, OK 73165.
59. Charles Miller, Box 175, So. Bay, FL 33493.
60. Michael Mills, 1585 Quaker Rd., Macedon, NY 14502.
61. Kevin Mooney, 216 Charles St., Westfield, NJ 07090.
62. R.L. Morton, 173 Irving Ave., Ottawa, ONT, CANADA K1Y 1Z6.
63. Robert Olsen, 9100 E. Harry Apt. 211, Wichita, KS 67207.
64. D.S. Palter, Box 156, Cedarhurst, NY 11516.
65. Al Pearson, Rte 1, Box 177B5, Kearneysville, W VA 25430.
66. Dave Pilant, 112 Olympic, Moore, OK 73060.
67. Rick Ragsdale, 1009 Crazing Lane, Jacksonville, AR 72076.
68. Clark Reynolds, 6731 37th Ave., Sacramento, CA 95824.
69. Al Rodriguez, 2112 Roosevelt, Bakersfield, CA 93304.
70. Bernard Sampson, 123 Sixth St., Middlesex, NJ 08846.
71. Ben Schilling, Apt. 315, 24730 Roosevelt Ct., Farmington Hills, MI 48018.
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88. Tony Watson, 1481 S. Palm #207, Las Vegas, NV 89104.
89. John Lesch, 8821 Robson St., Tampa, FL 33615.

Well, the list is almost in alphabetical order. Now, if any of you haven't yet received a copy of PEEK, you probably will pretty soon!

* * * * *

"His reasons are as two grains of wheat hid in two bushels of chaff: you shall seek all day ere you find them, and, when you have them, they are not worth the search."

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE, I, i, 114.

"He is come to open
The purple testament of bleeding war."

RICHARD II, III, iii, 93.

"The ripest fruit first falls."

RICHARD II, II, i, 154.

"I see thy glory like a shooting star
Fall to the base earth from the firmament."

RICHARD II, II, iv, 19.

READERS' RHETORICAL REPLIES

((from Mark Kraft))

Dear Ron,

I want you to print this in RRR:
Kraft's Ingenious Lie Lesson: KILL

There are three types of Dippers. Those who lie, cheat, and steal, those who intimidate, and those who use a combination of these methods. Intimidation works well if the victim is successfully intimidated; if not you will have lost a friend/gained an enemy. Lies work too, but only if you are at a friendly status with your victim. This includes no mudslinging, writing twice a turn, and if you have to, telling only one person about your intentions. This allows near-perfect stabs if properly planned. If your move is anticipated the problems can be medium to totally overwhelming, but don't give up. If you have invaded a large and threatening country or even a small country, it's always useful to write to whomever you stab and say trash such as, "Sorry, I needed the supply center, but I will restore you to power again; I commend you on . . . etc." This will improve your relations with other countries. Your main goal with this is that you don't get an enemy for life.

Remember, Dippers are only about as truthful as politicians; don't trust them.

Mark Kraft

IS-

Please give me all the info you know about ORIGINS so I (and others, I presume), can be there, like I plan to be.

((Thanks for writing the "mini-article", Mark. I'm sure if anyone had any doubt about whether the mind of a 13 year old can be as devious as an adult's, you have shown them! ORIGINS will be held at the Dunfey Hotel in San Mateo the Fourth of July weekend this summer. That's about all I know at this time. If anyone knows more details on this we would all appreciate it if you'd let us know. Thanks-RR))

((from Dennis Sulsberger))

Dear Ron,

Happy holidays to you and Char! I hadn't written in quite awhile and with my finals behind me I decided to drop you a note.

I'm still trying to recover from that rather frustrating experience in the last game I was in in MM ((79AN)), but I'm pretty well over it and as soon as a few of my other games are over I'll try and get back in a game.

Congratulations to both you and Jenny on her sports column. After Jane Kennedy and Rhylis Whatshername I thought all women were just inherently football stupid. But that is all changed now. All can you not like somebody who has the guts and the brains to pick the Vikings to win the Super Bowl? Did you see the Cleveland game? There's probably a dozen teams with better talent, but this year the Vikings are going to do it!

Again have a happy holidays and take care.

Yours,
Dennis

((And it's good to hear from you again! Dennis and I have been friends in this hobby for a long time (I had a great deal of fun eliminating him from 78AE!). Apparently, you are talking about the Fake MM #27 in your letter! Several people were taken in by it at first, so you are not alone in this respect. Jenny's real pick for the SB from the NFC was the Eagles, even though as a long-time Dallas Cowboys fan she was pulling for the Texans in the Championship Game. I did see the Cleveland game and the Vikings did demonstrate a great deal of improvement over the latter part of the season. Too bad for the Rams (Boo-Hoo!) Thanks for writing-RR))

RRR (Con'd)

((from Rick Raysdale))

Ron,

THIS IS TOO MUCH! In a society already drowning in a sea of sexually-oriented advertising, TV programming, movies, magazines, and books, the DILLOMACY hobby WAS an island paradise of good, clean fun beckoning all to its pristine and unsullied beaches. But no more. MURD'RING MINISTERS has singlehandedly dragged the good name of DILLOMACY into the depths of sordid vulgarity by publishing a "subzine" (must get its name from its success in torpedoing reputations) featuring a nude woman on its cover!!!! How gross! How vulgar!! How tasteless!!! Could not this Jane Froskin have posed for the cover of this publication clad somewhat more appropriately?? Good taste demands that a publication foisted unannounced upon an unsuspecting reader not contain such pictures. What would have been a more appropriate and tasteful outfit? I suggest black hose (seamed, of course), a black leather waist cincher/garter belt (a "waspie" as they are known in the trade), and a pair of 7" spike-heeled leather pumps like they advertise in the Frederick's of Hollywood catalog. Gloves are optional. And since the hint of bestiality is so very blatant, perhaps a braided leather bullwhip (cat-of-nine-tails would be ineffective against such a brute) would complement the outfit. No masks. Masks are passe this year.

The biggest disappointment of the mid-month issue was (seriously) the lack of mention as to when the next installment of TWILIGHT ZINE will make its merry way into our mailboxes. I hope it isn't a comet zine on the wane and ready to fade into its namesake. What's the latest word on it????

Rick

((Well, obviously Rick has been discussing not the real first mid-monthly issue of MM, but rather the Fake #27 perpetrated by "Jane Froskin" (see this issue's STUFF). There were other letters beside the preceding two, but they were good examples and Rick's was very cleverly done and fun to read. I think that everyone realizes by now that the "JoJ" #27 was indeed a fake. As to the true identity of the perpetrator of this deed, see this issue's article, "To Win or Not Win -- What Does It All Mean?" for the revelation of the true faker's identity. As to TZ, Rick and all other TZ game players received TZ #8 a while back and TZ #9 will be in the next regular issue of MM (#29). However, and let me emphasize that Al has not made a final decision, but it is quite possible that he will be giving it up before long. Al has dropped from all his DI games and is in the process of dropping out of the hobby. (Could this be linked to his close friend Dave Berlmutter's recent decision to get out of the hobby??) So I am not free at this time to discuss the future of the TZ games or TZ itself until Al knows for sure what he will do. Just in case, is there anyone who would be interested in taking over the GNING responsibilities from Al? - (R))

((from Jim Williams))

Dear Ron,

I just got the most interesting item in the mail today. Simply the best issue of MURD'RING MINISTERS ever!! I will assume that you have received your copy by now also.

I am, of course, assuming that this "issue #27" is a fake. If it is, our friend (Gary "Memphis Flash" Coughlan) has outdone himself. (Or maybe PJ Masters!) If it is not a fake, then I want to subscribe to MM for life! Just tell me where I sign!

"Joy of Jane"! I almost laughed myself out of my starched shorts when I
((Con'd next pg.))

RRR (Con'd)

read that delightful little zine. Those 10 Diplomandments really hit home. The eleventh Diplomandment was missing, however. (or was it the twelfth?) "Thou shalt not createth thy own false zines, making them humorous to maketh forget that war is serious busineth."

Anyway, issue #27 was enjoyed immensely by yours truly, as I am sure you did.

In closing I would like to toy with tradition. Since I forgot to second the Memphis Flasher's ..oops..Flash's nomination for MM of the M (Sorry Gary!) as a past wiener of this coveted (?) award, I would like to nominate Jane Proskin as this month's Murr'ring Minister of the Month. Arnetto the Bare will have to wait until next month, at least.

I don't even care if she is a product of Bruce Linsey's imagination, she is the best Diplomatic poster girl I've seen ever. (And there is always a chance that she is real, and may head to Memphis down I-80, through Iowa. Since I live less than a mile from I-80, I would be happy to accommodate her for a night. We might even get a little face to face in).

You are really going to have to work to top that issue, Ron. Good luck.

Regards,

Jim

((I can think of no one who deserves the MM of the M Award more for the month of December than the lovely Jane Proskin. She is hereby declared the December MM of the M! Now, don't forget, Jane, that you must in turn nominate someone for this coveted(?) award for the month of Jan. As for her pet Bare, Arnetto, alas, I'm afraid he will never have a chance to become MM of the M or anything else for that matter. Jane became displeased with Arnetto and gave him to a dog food canning plant in Duena Park! (See Jane's 1EEK DIZINE). The Fake #27 was so good in fact, that Black Jack wanted me to count it as the real MM #27 and go on from there. Maybe I should have. But in any case, you are right that I enjoyed it very much. You may have missed your chance to get a little though. I mean FTE. DII of course! I heard that Jane dropped by and put ~~up~~ ~~up~~ up with John Michalski in Moore, OK already. I wonder where she will turn ~~on~~ up next? Thanks for writing-
RB))

((from Gary Coughlan))

Dear Ron,

I received the fake MM today and I guess the secret is out at last. I salute Al Rodriguez for an excellent MM fake. I like it even better than Al's previous VOLKSWANDERUNG fakes or his 1E/RL.

But he did spill the (chili?) beans when he said I faked VOD and RETALIATION. It is true. I faked those two zines in order to garner some publicity for the zine I intend to start in January. No, that's not the real reason, that's a lie. I really faked them in order to get even with Bob Olsen, my persecutor. He had labeled me as "Billy Carter" in our 3-3 game and I vowed to get even with him -- but how? Then it came to me in a flash while I was in Memphis -- Brux had needled Olsen in VOD's Centaurus game. So I wrote up some vicious press for that game. But then I realized no one would see it and that I would have to fake the whole zine which caused me a lot of expense and made me more angry at Olsen. That's when I turned with a vengeance to RETALIATION. But I played it smart this time and attacked all of my enemies at one blow thus justifying the expense in my own mind.

I had planned to reveal myself in January but Al did that for me in the fake MM. I knew it was Al when he said that the correct spelling of the word was "Jose"

((Con'd next pg.))

RRR (Con'd)

and not the "Hosea" that I used. (Jose of course being the Spanish version). But, in the South, we spell it Hosea after the book in the Bible. The fake MM and the fake RETALIATION are two classic cases where the perpetrators were unmasked by the spellings they chose. I think it is pretty convincing evidence too when ENVOY, VOLKERWANDERUNG, and VOICE OF DOOM, all reliable zines say in print that Al Rodriguez was the MM faker but what does the real MM say?

Sincerely,

Gary

((I must admit that there are several clues leading one to suspect Al Rodriguez as the man behind the Fake. However, if you want to find the true identity of the Faker, see the article this issue by "Johnnie". I would like to extend my congratulations to you on the two fakes that you were responsible for, that is, the Mellow Yellow VOD and the Danzai for Bonzo RETALIATION Mr. Donovan. And also for letting me in on the whole thing right after the Mellow Yellow issue was mailed. You have now achieved such a fine reputation in the hobby for the above fakes that some even thought you were responsible for the Fake MM! Jim Williams (see his letter somewhere in this RRR) and Black Jack Masters both suggested it might be you and who knows how many others were thinking the same thing. You must be interested in knowing that BJM even told me that he mailed them for you! That Jack! I'm sure I speak for many others when I say that I'm looking forward to seeing issue #1 of your new zine, EUROIA EXPRESS. Thanks for writing! - RD))

((from Dick Martin))

Dear Ron,

Well . . . I'd kinda miss the big MMs if you cut back, but if you think it's appropriate . . . One thing's for sure, I'd much rather put out one big issue a month rather than two small ones. I just can't tie myself down so much these days! And as far as I can see, you'd need the Mid-monthlies. Why not just charge for a double issue rather than put out two small ones? Saves on time, postage, and confusion as far as I can tell.

Boy, your readers really love to harass me, don't they? Well, I'll fix them! Be prepared for more details later . . .

Take care,

Dick

((If you think my readers love to harass you now, just wait until you read the letter after this one! As far as the "Mid-monthly issue" goes, I have decided to try it this way for awhile and see how it is liked by the readership as a whole. I won't be publishing them all the time, maybe three, maybe more, a year would probably do it. But after the Readers' Ioll a few issues back, this seemed to be a good compromise to the desires of the subscribers. A lot of people don't like getting one issue (of MM) labeled "Issue 28-29" and counting as two issues against their subscription and I don't blame them. But I don't want to "burn-out" on my publishing as all too many others have done in the past by overloading myself. Neither do I want to make Joe X who lives in Rhode Island have to wait an extra 5 days to get his game's result because of the 3rd Class postage situation. So I will try it this way and see how I like it. I may very well come to agree with you in a few months and go back to one big monthly issue. We'll see. Thanks for your valuable comments, though. They are appreciated. - RD))

((RRR Con'd ~~XXXX~~ pg.))

TO WIN OR NOT WIN -- WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?

by
"Johnnie"

Most people who enjoy games enjoy competition. After all, when you play a game, that's what you are doing -- competing against an opponent(s) to see who can best fulfill the victory conditions. In football it's who can score the most points via touchdowns and field goals. In DIPLOMACY, it's gaining 18 ~~X~~ Supply Centers. In most games, if you are playing a game with an opponent of equal ability, you can figure you have a 50% chance of winning. While there are many multi-player games, there are few with as many as seven players all the time (representing 7 different "teams"). Therefore, if you are playing DIPLOMACY among opponents of equal ability (let's just say good DIPLOMACY players), you have a 1 in 7 (14%) chance of winning. This means that if you play in games with equal players, you can reasonably expect to win only one game in seven.

What I'm trying to say is simply this: chances of winning a DIPLOMACY game are not good. So if you realize you have a small chance of winning (and you do), you must realize that winning cannot be the primary goal in your playing a game of DIPLOMACY. Then, what?

Everybody needs to just relax and have more fun when they play! I mean, this is supposed to be a hobby, right? According to Webster, that is "a pursuit outside one's regular occupation engaged in for relaxation." This is why I enjoy sitting back and watching you guys play this crazy game and it should be the only reason anyone plays it. It's too bad that a few others can't face up to this and quit carrying on hate campaigns because someone helps to prevent them from winning a game.

Cross-game alliances, or vendettas, fall into this discussion also. I have seen guys completely throw away any chance they have of doing well in a game simply because someone who stabbed them in a previous game took over a standby position in their game, and they kamikazed out against the hated player. What good does that do? I just can't understand why someone would ruin a position they have strived so hard to transform into winning potential through months of negotiations just to "punish" someone who attacked them in an entirely separate game, months or even years in the past.

~~XXXX~~ When we first send in our gamefee and sign up for a new game, we do so with the foreknowledge that we do indeed have a very small chance of winning. Therefore, if anything happens to prevent our win we ~~are indeed to have a very small chance of winning~~ (I'm really blowing it today!) should be able to accept it and make the best of the situation. You can either do what you can to hurt your enemy who has done this terrible deed -- as retribution; to warn others what happens when you are stabbed; for the hell of it; or whatever your reasons might be . . . but there's no way you should allow this event to block out your better judgement and have you throw away your good position in Game B, simply because the guy stabbed you in Game A. This is one branch of cross-gaming. Most veterans frown on this practice and it's easy to understand why.

So then why play DIPLOMACY if not to win? Why? For the fun of it. No other game I know of is as challenging or intriguing. There is very little luck involved (unless your visited by me, that is; Gnomes are lucky you know). Rather it is a game of skill where seven individual minds are pitted against each other in a common goal, a goal in which it is possible for only one to attain: Mastery of Europe!

((Con'd next pg.))

TO WIN OR NOT WIN . . .

However, the whole point of this short article is to help you realize that although actually achieveing your goal of winning is extremely difficult to achieve, making the attempt through the rules of the game is what it's all about. Never was the old adage better applied than to a DIPLOMACY win:

"Getting there is (more than) half the fun."

Enjoy.

Johnnie

PS-

Yes, you've probably guessed by now. It was me who really did the fake MM #27!

((Incredible. You are not going to believe this. But I feel I owe each of you an explanation of the identity of the above article. As you noticed, it's written by "Johnnie." But who is "Johnnie"? I was just finishing typing the prededing article before "Johnnie's" late at night (it was around midnight) and had just put some "fine Columbian" in my pipe and smoked it when I leaned back in my chair at my desk in the study and took a nice long sip of my beer. I was feeling kind of nice (the way I've got to get to sit and type all this "erroncous shit" for hours at a time) when all of a sudden "Johnnie" stepped around from behind my typewriter. "Johnnie" was a Gnome! (If you don't know what a Gnome is you can write to John Michalski, Box 526-Q, Rt. 10, Moore, OK 73165 who will be glad to answer this or any other questions you might have concerning D&D creatures as it is well known around the hobby how much John enjoys the D&D tournaments at conventions. Or, you can see the accompanying photo (on the next page) taken by my wife Char, who happened to walk in at this time, luckily with a camera, and snap the picture . . . OK, OK I know I look a little weird but what would you look like if you were drinking and sat talking to a Gnome who had appeared from nowhere?!)) "Johnnie" told me how mad he was I gave Al Rodriguez credit for the fake MM #27 when it was really himself who was the perpetrator! In fact he said something like, "I hope you correct all that erroneous shit you printed in MM #27. Don't expect any more favors from me until you do . . . that means no more great ((?)) articles like this one!" And then he vanished. All that was left was the preceding article supposedly written by "Johnnic". Wow. Pretty strange, huh? The shot on the opposite page is a little bigger than 3x5 but you can cut "Johnnie" out of there, Mike (LSD) Conner, because I'd like to nominate "Johnnie" the Gnome as Official Hobby Mascot in your contest. I feel Johnnic is qualified to represent the hobby because if you believe him, he is solely responsible for every fake zine published. And besides, who has done more for making this hobby fun than "Johnnie"?

RB))

* * * * *

"Let none presume
To wear an undeserved dignity.
O! that estates, degrees, and offices
Were not deriv'd corruptly, and that
clear honor
Were purchas'd by the merit of the
wearer."

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE II, ix, 39.



RRR (Con'd)

((from John Michalski))

I agree with your comments in response to a typically irrational Dick Martin letter as appeared in MM #26. Calling it anything you want is indeed helpful when I struggle to keep my zeen within the 12 sheet, 2 oz. limit, and in comes a Martin monstrosity of 21 sheets of overweight paper with a note on the outside, all for one 20¢ stamp. Guess what I called that issue?!!?

Also hitting the Martin on the head was your quote about baseball being filler. Baseball is so dull that it wouldn't exist if there were anything else to use as a backdrop for summer beer commercials. I think it will soon lose its place in the honor roll with hot dogs, apple pie, and Chevrolet. Clearly Martin is such a degenerate that I'll bet he calls his zeen a zein to boot. Must be from NY or something . . .

John Michalski

((Yeah, I'd like to know how Dick manages to get some of his HUGE issues to their destination on one 20¢ stamp too. As for the rest of your letter, I've got a hunch we'll hear again from Dick before long . . . - RD))

((from Bob Olsen))

Dear Ron,

I had been under the impression that MM was a class zinny, what with the presence of people like Jennifer King and Jack Masters -- arguably the finest player in the game today, even though he doesn't like my press -- gracing your pages. But now I must wonder whether my impression was correct in view of your continued policy of giving a forum to the meretricious and fatuous scribblings of this Gary Coughlan person. Oh, sure, many people -- Denise Tucker for example -- will tell you, "Aw, Gary's harmless! How could anybody so pathetic be anything but?" And it's true that poor Gary does appear to be hanging around the hobby mostly in the hope that someone will bronze him and set him up in front of a courthouse somewhere in Mississippi; however, his recent letter to MM, which surely represents the absolute apotheosis of crazed bombast and air-brained innuendo, cries out -- nay, shrieks -- any, whimpers -- for a reply from the injured victim of Gary's savage diatribes, namely, me.

It disturbs me greatly that Gary, reaching as he has done the nethermost level of personal vendetta, has chosen to embarrass me publicly in front of the entire hobby with his heartless ridicule. I refer of course to his charge that I have lived in Nebraska, and I call upon Gary to prove his charges. Let's see some evidence, you scum! Iroduce if you can one shred of evidence that I have ever set foot in Nebraska, and I will pay, out of my own pocket, for your next gamefee in your favorite zinny, ULTSENT. I challenge you, Mr. So-Called Gary Coughlan! Irove it, you swine!

I think that all competent DILLOMACY players were amused -- if not shocked -- at Gary's grotesque boasting concerning the Turkish army in Silesia in R-3. That Gary can brag about and actually enjoy the greatest single blunder of his incredibly botched life can only excite our pity at the same time it induces our laughter. Soon Gary may find that his puny army Silesia counts for quite little when pitted against the awesome power of the Austro-German alliance.

Turning to a related subject, and reiterating my profound admiration for Dick Martin and my emphatic endorsement of his right to choose whatever name he pleases for his zinny (interesting, is it not, that in all the hobby only DRUX and I have boldly come out in favor of free speech; you others, what of you?) I might suggest that Gary study not just the name, GRAB DOTS!!!, but also the

((Con'd next pg.))

RRR (Con'd)

concept behind the name, which he might discover is the crux of the matter. When Gary becomes a big-time pubber (the requirements for that rank apparently dropping daily) he can name his zinnie anything he wishes, in accordance with his grasp of tactics and strategy. Possible names might be GRAB SILESIA!!! or SUICIDE OUT!!! or perhaps SCREW FRIENDS!!!

Finally, I could disclose the origin of the name, "Memphis Flash", but Gary is after all a valuable hobby resourcee (and an interesting anthropological find), and besides, according to Jack, the "subway incident" has been long forgotten. Bringing up yet another Coughlan scandal would hardly seem to be the thing to do at this point.

Yours,
Bob Olsen

((Gary, is all of this true? - RD))

((from Tom Mainardi))

Dear Ron,

I read the sample MM that you sent me and was very impressed by it. I've heard of your zine (as in mine) before and have seen many favorable plugs about it. So, I've decided to sub. . .

When I was reading MM #25 I couldn't believe all of the letters that are sent to you. I enjoyed reading them especially the one from Bob Olsen and the ones concerning the Caruso-Linsey feud. . .

Your article on the "Trieste Gambit" was very informative. It leaves open a lot of questions; like the status of France, and Russia. As much as I question the use of "polls" maybe you could run one in which the person asked is Italy. They are asked: "With a certain French non-aggression pact, would you take Trieste and stop or continue against Austria?" It could prove to be interesting. Well, I guess that's it. Keep up the great work.

Thanks again,
Tom

((Thank you for the kind words. Without hearing something nice once in awhile publishing would scarcely be worth it. Thanks! As to your comments on the "Trieste Gambit" -- I feel that any time you are discussing strategic ideas in DIPLOMACY you must speak only in generalities. Each and every game is so different! And that's what keeps some of us hanging on to this hobby so long. I hope a few people feel like responding to your question. It is the most important one in considering using this opening. I'd guess you have about a 50-50 chance of talking Italy into being your (Austria's) firm ally. The other 50% of the time he will probably keep going. But other questions in any particular game might be: "Do you see an R/T Alliance forming?" "Is France throwing everything north or will she head into the Med?" and others. The entire board must be considered before daring to use something as unorthodox as this particular opening. But I didn't mean to advocate it as Austria's best opening all of the time. But IF a R/T forms and IF France and Germany and/or England get tied up in a war (events you might help one way or another) then the "Trieste Gambit" might be in order. Thanks for ~~xxx~~ writing. - RD))

((Con'd next pg.))

* * * * *

"Men's evil manners live in brass; their
virtues
We write in water."

HENRY VIII, IV, ii, 45.

RRR (Con'd)

((from Mike Mills))

Dear Ron,

Got your orders, letter, and artillery battery. Dan will get issue #14 as a 1st issue in his subscription. I won't tell him why, I'll just say Ron made it possible, etc.

Won't he ever notice his 210 battery missing? And are you sure taking it was the 'thing to do'? I am glad to have it, but dislike the feeling that you may have gotten yourself in some trouble by procuring it the way you did. I guess you know Dan well enough to do this, and I can't say that I pushed you. Oh well, I hope he doesn't break out the whip and chains the next time he sees you.

GESTETNER uses silk screen? (OOOOHHHH CLASS!) I knew you had a Mercedes on your hands. My A3 Dick 437 uses a cotton pad -- now I they want \$8.00+tax for the protective covers -- you have to buy 100 of them!!!! RI OFF! The one I have I've used for a year, and is just showing signs of deterioration. At that rate, I'll still have 26 left when I die.

About Jennifer King's exotic male dancer suggestion, I formally nominate Gary Cottonfields to represent the DIPLOMACY Hobby at Jennifer's 1st Exotic Male Dancer Dance-Off. Gary just bought some Jordache jeans, and will bump to the grind of Memphis' favorite music, banjo disco! Please publish the pictures of this: blackmail is so much fun.

As for footabla, hell -- wait -- by the time this sees print is's all over with, oh well. I'll write later and tell you if my predictions were confirmed.

Now, who should be the MM of the M for January 1981? Naturally, it should be everyone's favorite cuddle-bunny: Kathy Agatha Byrne, of Byrne Syndrome fame! She's a natKch!

Kath's got brains, charm, longer knives, and a better body than 99.44% of the Hobby, and in a swimsuit what a sight! She's taking singing lessons and aspires to be a truck driver for the Fulton Fish Market! What class!

Oh, is it true Mi(chal)ski is directing a movie starring John Caruso, Bruce Linsey, and Kathy Byrne, called "All Quiet on The New York Front"?

Probably not . . .

As for the MM Readers' Poll . . . I see only 1 vote was cast for SQUAD LEADER as another game in MM. . . too bad, I would've liked to have played a scenario of it or watched one being played in MM . . . it would allow for some general education, or how about if in each scenario, each leader counter was represented by a player . . . Thus, 3 German leaders and 2 Russian ones would mean 5 players for the scenario. Each leader is designated which troops to lead in battle according to your determination, but the real flair would be that troops in one sector led by a leader would not know what another friendly squad on the other side of the board would do . . . just like in the real world. Naturally, friendlies could correspond with each other before and during moves, etc., but the chance that one squad or group of squads would decide to attack a different objective would be quite interesting . . . I would suggest something 'light' at first, like the GUARDS COUNTERATTACK, since it uses the basic rules, and is 'clean' for that reason, and there are 3 Russian and 5 (?) German leaders making the game hinge on some command.

If you ever would decide this is an idea worth pursuing I'd opt to play Cpt. Wetzelberger (9-2).

Oh . . . I suspect 1st class rates will be 19¢ for the 1st oz. I collect stamps and saw that the IO is issuing a new stamp Dec. 27th, a 19¢ regular postage stamp. Who knows, maybe we'll be using those stamps with the 'A' on them again, but 19¢ sounds right.

Ta!

Mike Mills

RRR (con'd)

((Thanks for writing, Mike. Hope you don't mind I put your two letters together to save a bit of space. I've kinda hinted to Dan how he got his sub to EM but he's getting kinda curious so I promised him I'd own ~~up~~ in this issue. Dan had a cup of old wargame counters mixed together sitting in an obscure corner of his apartment. I did a doubletake when I recognized the rather distinctive back pattern as 1914 p~~æ~~ces, having used to have the game some time ago myself. I picked up the one on top and guess what it was. That's right! A 210 German artillery battery just like the one I remembered Mike Mills advertising for rather urgently. Since I remembered Mike offering a free one year's subscription to ~~M~~ EM for the missing battery I thought I'd surprise Dan and send in for him without his knowledge. A surprise, get it? I knew that Dan didn't have the game anymore and would never miss something he didn't realize he had, even. And so, Dan, if you object to what I did, let me know and I'm pretty sure I know someone else I can get one of those 210 counters from to replace it. . . As for those p~~æ~~ctures ~~x~~ you sent me of Gary -- sorry I couldn't print them. They're pretty funny . . . Speaking of Jennifer, her column will return after the Super Bowl, probably with issue #30. OK, Kathy has been nominated for MM of the M; will Jane Iroskin, December's outgoing MM of the M second the nomination? SQUAD LEADER is a great game! Dan, Al, and myself played a game just last week. We played the IRON CROSS scenario, "The Law of the Tiger". Dan had the Germans while Al divided our 19 tanks into two combat groups and assaulted the ridge! It was close for awhile as Cpt. Bolter's Tiger and one of the Mrk IV's destroyed 6 of my tanks between them. In the end we had destroyed all 5 Ger. tanks, lost 11 of our own, and exited 8 tanks (only 4 were needed to win). As far as a SL scenario in MM, if I can get a pbm system that I think will work, we might just give it a try. And finally, yep the postal rate will be going up soon; March is what John M. said in BR. Well, thanks again for the letter - RB))

((from Bobby Stephens))

I received MM #27 (the real one). Good work. About your question as to whether your readers prefer a page one with writing or a page ~~x~~ as on #27, I feel that pages such as in #27 should be done every now and then, but not on every issue. That way, when you do decide to print a picture, it will be a pleasant surprise. Maybe you could put a picture on your special no-game issues!?!
Best wishes,
Bobby

((Yours is the second I've received to this effect and unless I hear from someone who has a different preference, this is the way I'll do it. It doesn't cost that much more to run a picture (\$4.00 to cut the stencil) but it is some extra trouble. I probably will do it in future all-reading issues, like this one. (Have you seen "Johnnie's picture yet?) Thanks for taking the time to share an opinion. - RB))

THE TORRID TOWER OF TERROR

(a journey beneath the earth in a dragon's stronghold) Part 4 as told by Ron Brown

Yes, our fearless foursome - Kosgriff the Mage, Lerry the Priest, Filler the Minstrel, and Al the Warrior - had just been informed that the treasure they were seeking belonged to Smaug, a name only known from ages long past. Even though the message contained a warning they were determined to seek out this fabulous find. Through the door they charged and entered into a musty, darkened hallway.

((Con'd next page.))

TTT (Con'd)

Evil permeated the very pores of the rocky floor and the group felt rather than knew that they had entered a place of great evil.

On they pressed and soon the passage bore to the right. After another ten minutes of uninterrupted negotiation of the passage a door appeared on the left. Curiosity getting the best of the group, they broke through the door, thrust their sputtering torch through the opening and saw . . . nothing; nothing but an empty room with old, broken-down furniture scattered about. Filler thought he saw what might be a closet door on the other side of the room and started forward.

Suddenly, the minstrel reeled back in pain, blood flowing from his left shoulder! Others quickly readied their weapons while Kosgriff began the mental preparations that would allow him to throw his magic missile spell while all strained their eyes to find where the attack originated.

They saw nothing but were amazed when the minstrel screamed as blood began flowing from his right thigh. "Something most foul has dealt me an evil blow!" he cried even as his own sword began flashing forward. "Here thing of darkness! Feel my bite!" Filler took a full swing in front of him into the empty air with his sword and struck something which gave out an evil hiss. An invisible creature! Or were there more than one? Feeling that trying to fight something that couldn't be seen was not the thing to do, the party began backing out towards the door they had entered. Filler, being the nearest to the center of the room and the recipient of the invisible attacks turned quickly and began to run for the door. But the poor unfortunate never took more than two steps before he toppled to the ground face-first, screaming horribly, while his entire backside became soaked with red blood. This was too much for the others as they broke and ran out of the room, leaving their bleeding, dead friend behind.

"That was close," said one.

"Poor Filler!" said another.

"Torn to shreds," said the third. All felt remorse for their fallen companion but none felt inclined to brave facing the room's inhabitants again. The decision was made to continue. About 60' down the hall, they came to a fork. Electing to head right, they came to a door and decided to try it. It opened easily to a small room with a pool at the back of it. Closer inspection showed it to be a part of an underground stream. A skeletal figure could be seen at the bottom holding a strange tube in one hand. This was successfully retrieved and found to contain a map to Smaug's Hoard! What joy, what rapture!

After a brief rest the threesome elected to follow their newly found map and find the treasure. Following the corridor past and ignoring several doors the party reached the section of the map labeled "through here you will find entrance to Smaug's treasurehouse. Beware!" But the corridor they stood in was a deadend, with only a tapestry on the wall of the far end of the hall, where the arrow on the map pointed. Kosgriff pulled one end aside to discover a hidden door . . . and something else as well! For as he lifted the run a man-sized figure, but solid black and two-dimensional, leaped out of the shadows and grabbed him! Kosgriff felt his knees buckle as his strength left him but he was able to free himself from the creature's icy grip.

Perry the Priest meanwhile recognizing the presence of a member of the Undead stepped forward with his Holy Symbol of Rolak of Numenor and quickly recited his prayer for Banishment of the evil spirits of the restless Undead. It worked and the evil Shadow quickly disappeared into the many shadowy crevices of the passage walls. Kosgriff quickly recovered from the cold touch of the monster and the three were ready to follow the quest for treasure through the hidden door . . .

Next: Part V "The Death Trap of Smaug"

ITALIANO IRIDE
(a Diplomacy article)

by
David Grabar

Italy is absolutely the best country to play. Whenever you get a chance to pick a country, always pick Italy. No one can hurt you and you get to sit and watch everyone fight forever. You can watch Russia fight off its 3 front attack, you can watch England stab France in the back. You can watch Turkey walk into Austria. And, no one can touch you. You can watch the excitement of a coordinated attack on Munich, or watch the landing of English troops in Holland. Imagine the excitement of watching the falling of St. Petersburg to the English.

The only way to open as Italy is A Ven-Lie; A Rom-Ven; and F Nap-Ion. This way, no one can even attack you. You bounce everyone and you go back to the beginning position. In the fall, you take Tunis and then sit and watch.

My favorite opening is F Ion-Nap; A Rom-Mar, and A Ven-War. This will create the same results as the above paragraph. But, everyone will think you're an idiot. Thus, they will not concentrate on taking you out until they take out the "GOOD" players. Of course, you have to sacrifice Tunis, but I feel it is worth it.

Middle Game strategy is a little more complex. Move A Ven-Tiri; A Rom-Ven; and F Tun-Ion with support from F Nap. Of course, this will all bounce, but it will send letters from Turkey to you saying please ally. Of course he is lying, but that's OK. You don't like Turkey anyway. My favorite middle game move is F Tun-Wes; F Nap-Ion; A Ven-Tya; and A Rom-Ven. Then declare war on France, Germany, and Austria all in the same press release. First, these countries will go bananas trying to figure out how you, with your 1 unit is going to take them down. Secondly, they will decide you have been offered help by Russia, England, and Turkey if you attack them. They will forget about your one unit and immediately turn and face the other country. This is your big chance. Go for it! Attack everything. F Wes-Spa(sc); A Tya-Mun; A Ven-Tri; and F Ion-Gre. You can write a big press release about the ultimate stab. You can laugh in their faces. (The only problem is, this has about a .01% chance of working). 99.99% of the time you will bounce back.

The end game. At last you are needed. England writes you and says if you throw your 4 units with him, he will let you survive. Russia writes and says if you throw your 4 units with him, he will let you survive. Turkey writes and says if you throw in with him, he will let you survive and only take 2 of your centers. The excitement is overwhelming. You actually get to pick the winner of the game. Just think, you decide who will win.

I myself have completed 18 games as the country of Italy. (That's postal games). I've won 0. But, I have only been eliminated in 1 of the games. How's that for a record? That is something to be proud of. At DIPLOMACY tournaments, you casually say, "I've played in 18 DIPLOMACY games as Italy and have only lost once." (Of course, you didn't win the other 17, but, you survived, and through semantics, I would say you didn't lose.)

Let me tell you. For a real thrill of the game, a challenge, a feel of success, choose Italy the next time you play. I love it. I'ma tella youse dis. Italia isa da best.

* * * * *

((Thanks Dave, for a rather, uh, different point of view playing the illustrious nation of Italy. Speaking of Dave, I recall a story a friend of his told me once. This friend and Dave had recently attended PACIFICON. There Dave had discovered TSR's new role-playing game, SECRET AGENT. They went to Dave's parents' home afterwards where Dave proceeded to tell his mother all about what had transpired during the SA game. After patiently listening, his mom just shook her head sadly and said, "To think I caused all this by buying him that CHECKERS set when he was just a little boy." - RD))

WRAI-UI

Well, I didn't get nearly as much as I had originally intended but then maybe this will make me get motivated enough to put out another one of these in a few months. I want to get this out ASAP because of the requests for Houserules and Mailing Lists that I've had recently. I hope you liked this issue with mostly letters and stuff. The next one of these will have more articles and less other stuff. Remember get those NIXON AWARD Nominations in before long. And vote for "Johnnie" for Hobby Mascot! Til next time, remember . . .
 "To fear the worst oft cures the worse."

TROILUS AND CRESSIDA III, ii, 77.

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